

DRAFT

df  
GRR/GG/F 2115  
1 July 1963

25X1A

CHARTRING

The town of Chartring, or Sangpiling, is located in the valley of the Ye, or Lamaya, River at a distance of about 70 miles south-southwest of Li-t'ang and 90 miles southeast of Batang. Chartring may be identical with the Chinese locality called Hsiao-ch'eng -- although two distinct places by these names are shown on the 1:1,000,000 sheet of the area.\* The area is off the major caravan tracks and there is no known written description of the town and its environs. A route survey was conducted through the area about 10 years ago, but descriptive materials of this survey have not been located. In 1907 the lamastery at Chartring was besieged by the Chinese for a month and more recently Chartring was one of the early centers of anti-Chinese -- resistance once again requiring the use of Chinese military forces. The area is to be linked by road from Yümen on north to Li-t'ang, but it is questionable as to whether all parts of this route presently are motorable.

The Chartring area appears to be reasonably well-populated by Tibetan standards. Agricultural villages are scattered along the major

\*A better representation of the terrain and drainage patterns of the Sangpiling area is shown on WAC 436, based on the use of World War II photography. This WAC sheet, however, has been superseded by another chart series, the OHC, of which sheet H-10 covers the area. Unfortunately, the OHC has changed some of the place names (the Ye becomes the Shan-shih).

CONFIDENTIAL

river valleys and some of their tributaries, mostly on valley flats but also on higher upper slopes -- particularly in the south and southwest. Although limited upland pastures exist, they are neither large nor extensive -- with one notable exception -- and consequently few of the inhabitants are purely nomadic. Most of the villagers, however, probably possess a few animals, and they likely are taken to upland pastures for summer grazing.

# I. Terrain and Vegetation

Terrain. The Chartring area is mostly ridge and valley country with the elevation of the major stream valleys generally between 9,000 to 11,000 feet with ridges rising 3,000 to 5,000 feet higher. Ridge summits and peaks are comparatively low for Tibet, particularly in the western section of the area where elevations vary between 13,500 and 15,000 feet. Somewhat higher mountains occur to the east and southwest with peaks upwards to 17,000 feet.

Although most of the area consists of dissected, mountainous terrain, the most prominent terrain feature is a small, remnant plateau, about 10 by 5 miles, located some 35 miles northwest of Chartring. The plateau is rolling and hummocky, probably about 13,000 to 14,000 feet high, and dotted with small depressions and marshy areas. Although short grass probably covers much of the area, some bare rock is exposed. Wooded slopes drop fairly sharply on all sides. The plateau undoubtedly is used for grazing in summer; otherwise it probably is uninhabited, although along the southeastern edge, just below the level of the plateau, are several houses and cultivated fields. Additionally, several well-used trails leading

generally northwest-southeast, bisects the plateau, connecting the well populated river valleys that lead west to the Yangtze and the Tasu and Ra river valleys to the east.

Between this important plateau and Chartring are three roughly north-south aligned river valleys -- the Tasu, Ra, and Ye -- with their intervening mountainous divides. The first two eventually meet and then join the Ye; the latter empties into the Yangtze about 60 miles southwest of Chartring. Each of these river valleys exhibit similar characteristics. East and north-east of the plateau, the rivers flow through narrow, mostly wooded valleys at elevations of from 11,000 to 12,000 feet. In places trees extend to the valley floors and the valleys appear to be uninhabited. These conditions are found primarily in the northern sections of these valleys, although a similar wooded section of the Ra occurs southeast of the plateau just prior to and including the sharp turn in the valley from a north-south to an east-west alignment. The section of the Ra just described can be identified by a massive block of craggy cliffs and peaks just to the west around which the Ra bends from south flowing to west flowing. Alternating with wooded, uninhabited valley areas are sections where valley flats widen sufficiently to permit cultivation. Here small villages of scattered houses are located on ribbons of cultivated fields. The Tasu and Ra valleys, for example, are cultivated along most of their courses east of the plateau.

Southeast of the plateau, each of the rivers changes direction and swings to the southwest and west. As the rivers descend, their valleys deepen and in places become narrow gorges. Consequently, valley bottom

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

settlements become less frequent, replaced by villages, cultivated fields, and trails on upper slopes several hundred to a thousand or more feet above the river. Vegetation also is less in the lower river valleys, usually consisting of little more than various types of scrub and brush. The increasing depth of the valleys is indicated by the drop of the Ye from a reported 10,800 feet at Chartring to an estimated 7,000 feet where it enters the Yangtze. In these lower valleys, some of the tributaries away from the main stream have villages and land cultivated on valley sides.

The Ye valley in the vicinity of Chartring is well populated with a number of villages and scattered farm houses set in the midst of cultivated fields. Chartring is believed to be located at the point where the Ye swings from south to west, and most of the villages and cultivated land are located to the south of Chartring. Here the Ye flows in a small, narrow gorge of possibly 50 feet in depth, but above the gorge terraces extend back on which most of the settlements are located. In a few places, upper slopes a thousand or more feet above the valley floor have small patches of cultivated land and small villages.

Northeast of Chartring the river divides are quite narrow and consist of steep slopes and sharp ridges cut by narrow stream valleys. The river divides widen to the south and southwest and in places open into small patches of rolling plateau area, intermixed with rounded hills and summits. In other areas, particularly the divide between the Ye and the Ra southwest of Chartring, very rugged, steep-sided peaks and ridges with cliffs characterize the divides. This particular mountainous divide is a continuation of the prominent mountain block just north of the Ra, mentioned previously.

4  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

East of Chartring somewhat differing types of terrain exist. Mountains with partially wooded slopes rise steeply east of Chartring, then open into a high (around 15,000 feet) alpine upland of barren, rocky ridges and peaks, interspersed with small lakes from which flow meandering streams in open valleys. This type of terrain extends eastwards for 10 to 15 miles before elevations lower somewhat, and the terrain makes a transition to rolling, grassy hills through which flow several small streams in open, partly cultivated valleys. This is the area with the settlements of Chianagun and Dacha on the 1:1,000,000 sheet.

25X1C

Vegetation. Scattered patches of mostly coniferous forest are found throughout the Chartring area with forested areas more numerous to the northwest, southwest and east of Chartring. In the northwest forests may be found to the valley bottoms of the major streams and in a few places as high as the ridge lines. Good forests flank the craggy mountains southwest of Chartring. The forests are mostly composed of fir and spruce,



although an admixture of deciduous species such as birch, poplar and maple probably occurs at the lower elevation. Rhododendron is often the principal understory shrub; it also occurs in pure stands above the timberline. Although the forest is fairly dense in some areas, it also grades into open park-like forests with grassy glades and clumps of individual trees dotting the landscape. Most commonly but not invariably this type of spruce-fir woodlands will be found on northern, shady slopes and in deep side valleys.

25X1C

Some higher summits are either barren with rocky outcrops or are grass covered. To the south and southwest, the major rivers have carved deep enough valleys that in them less rainfall is received and consequently the vegetation consists mainly of sparse, drought-resistant plants and shrubs.

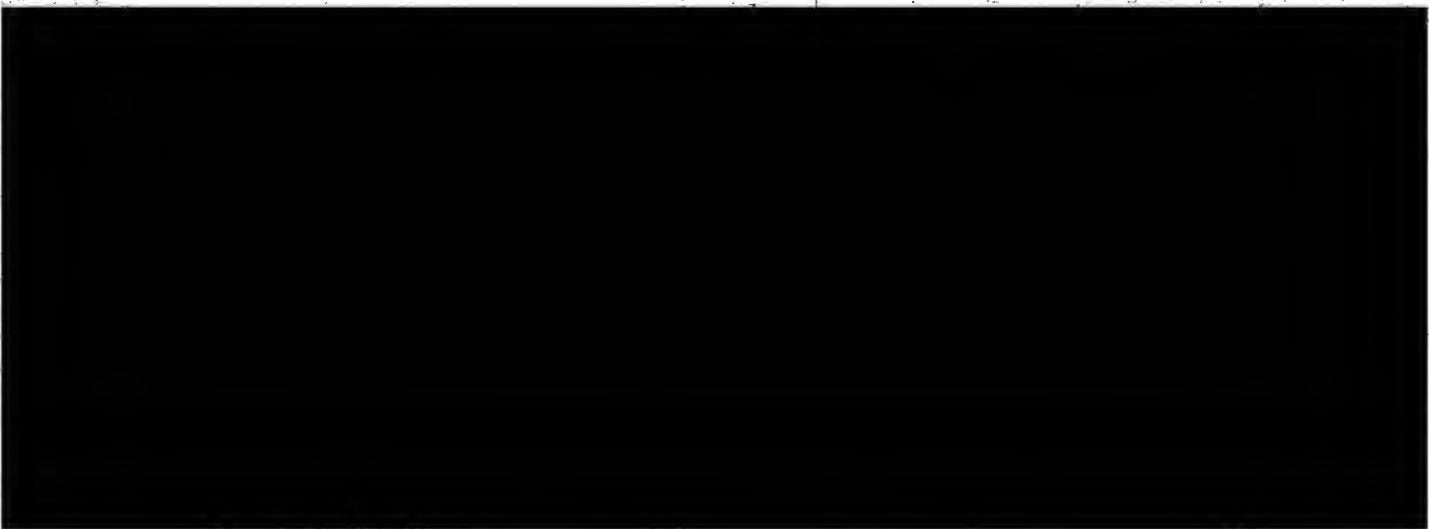
II. Climate. No specific climatic data are available for the Chartring area. The nearness of Chartring to Batang, however, suggests a similar climate; accordingly, reference should be made to the previously completed study on Eastern Tibet which included climatic statistics for Batang.

In the major river valleys at 10,000 foot elevations, winter temperatures will drop to the low 20's on most nights, on occasions somewhat lower.

CONFIDENTIAL

In the 14,000 foot uplands, however, temperatures should be significantly lower with night readings probably around 15°F on the average, occasionally dropping to around 0°F. Although snow probably occurs only occasionally and in light amounts in the major valleys, greater snowfall and strong winds will occur on the uplands. There is unlikely to be any lasting snow accumulations, except on the highest peaks and ridges and in shaded depressions.

In summer, temperatures range upwards to the low 80's and frost will be absent from the lower valleys for upwards to four to five months. In the uplands at 14,000 feet and above, frost and even snow flurries can occur during summer. Most of the yearly precipitation occurs during the May through August period with the annual total probably near 25 inches. Cloudy afternoons with showers likely is the most common weather pattern for the summer months; thunderstorms and hailstorms are common, particularly at the higher elevations. After the rainy period ends in late August or September, a period of fine weather with many clear days and little precipitation sets in that lasts until early winter.



25X1C

7  
CONFIDENTIAL

25X1C

Approved For Release 2001/11/20 : CIA-RDP79T01019A000100030009-8

Approved For Release 2001/11/20 : CIA-RDP79T01019A000100030009-8